United Nations A/58/229

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 August 2003

Original: English

Fifty-eighth session
Item 108 of the provisional agenda*
Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, disabled persons and the family

Promoting youth employment

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to resolution 57/165, by which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution, including on the progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network.

Section II of the report discusses the context of youth employment and provides the results of a survey of the status of national action plans for youth employment in Member States. Section III provides information on the background of the Youth Employment Network. Section IV discusses the work and achievements to date of the Youth Employment Network. Section V provides a summary of the outcome of the second meeting of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network. The implications of General Assembly resolution 57/165 for the Youth Employment Network are discussed in Section VI.

* A/58/150.

03-46247 (E) 030903

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	3
II.	The context of youth employment and the status of national action plans for youth employment	3–4	3
III.	Background of the Youth Employment Network	5–6	5
IV.	Work and achievements to date of the Youth Employment Network	7–15	5
V.	Outcome of the second meeting of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network	16–22	7
VI.	Implications of General Assembly resolution 57/165 for the Youth Employment Network	23–24	10
VII.	Conclusions	25–26	10
Annexes			
I.	Guidance note for the preparation of national reviews and action plans on youth employment in response to General Assembly resolution 57/165		12
II.	Guidelines for lead countries of the Youth Employment Network		15

I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to resolution 57/165 of 18 December 2002, by which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution, including on the progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network.[1] The resolution encourages Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people in the process. It also invites, within the context of the Youth Employment Network, the International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the United Nations Secretariat, the World Bank and other relevant specialized agencies, to assist and support Governments, upon request, and to undertake a global analysis and evaluation of progress made.

2. The note verbale of 25 March 2003 from the Secretary-General included a guidance note for the preparation of national reviews and action plans on youth employment (see annex I) and a short questionnaire on the status of national action plans for youth employment.

II. The context of youth employment and the status of national action plans for youth employment

3. More than 1 billion people today are between 15 and 24 years of age, and nearly 40 per cent of the world's population is below the age of 20. Eighty-five per cent of these young people live in developing countries where many are especially vulnerable to extreme poverty. The International Labour Office estimates that about 74 million young women and men are unemployed throughout the world, accounting for 41 per cent of the 180 million unemployed persons globally,[2] and many more young people are working long hours for low pay, struggling to eke out a living in the informal economy. There are an estimated 59 million young people between 15 and 17 years of age who are engaged in hazardous forms of work.[3] Young people actively seeking to participate in the world of work are two to three times more likely than older people to find themselves unemployed.[4]

4. Thirty-seven Member States responded to the short questionnaire that was sent out to determine the current status of their national action plans for youth employment.[5] In view of the limited number of responses to the questionnaire, it is possible to provide only a partial view of the status of action plans for youth employment. The results of the survey are summarized in the table below. Nineteen Member States reported that they had not prepared a national action plan for youth employment, and of these 11 reported that they were planning to prepare action plans. Several Member States reported that they did not have a specific action plan for youth employment because this issue was already being addressed either as part of an overall plan of action for employment or that there were already programmes in place that were addressing youth employment issues.

Status of national action plans for youth employment

I. Countries that have not prepared a national action plan

(a) Countries planning to prepare an action plan

Year in which plan will be prepared	
Barbados	2003-2004
Burkina Faso	2003
Cape Verde	2004
Ethiopia	undecided
Jamaica	2003
Lebanon	2004
Marshall Islands	2005
Nicaragua	2003
Senegal	2003
Slovenia	2004
Trinidad and Tobago	2003-2004

(b) Countries not planning to prepare an action plan

New Zealand	[b]
Austria	[c]
Czech Republic	[c]
Belarus	[d]
Cyprus	[d]
Germany	[e]
Norway	[f]
Sweden	[g]

II. Countries that have prepared a national action plan

(a) Countries that have reviewed their national action plans

Year in which action plan was reviewed	
Azerbaijan[a]	2000
Bangladesh	1978, 1981
Cambodia	2001
China	2002
Indonesia[a]	1996
Kazakhstan[a]	[h]
Kyrgyzstan	1998
Malaysia	Every 5 years
Mexico	2002
Monaco	2001-2002
Poland	2002
Qatar[a]	2000
Slovakia	2002, 2003
South Africa	2001
Switzerland	[h]
Syrian Arab Republic	2003
Ukraine	Annually

(b) Countries that have not reviewed their national action plans

Antigua and Barbuda[a]	[i]

[a] These countries reported, in addition, that action plans for youth employment were being prepared: Antigua and Barbuda (in 2004); Azerbaijan (in process); Indonesia (2003-2005); Kazakhstan (no date provided); and Qatar (2002).

[b] Broad programme for youth employment is already being implemented.

[c] Youth employment is considered within the National Employment Action Plan as part of the European Employment Strategy.

[d] No clarification was provided.

[e] Youth employment is addressed within the National Employment Plan and the National Plan for Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion which are updated biannually.

[f] Youth employment is integrated in the national labour market policy.

[g] Youth employment is included in the national Action Plan for Employment, which is reviewed annually.

[h] The year the review was undertaken was not provided.

[i] No review currently planned.

III. Background of the Youth Employment Network

5. In the Millennium Declaration, Member States resolved to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work".[6] The Youth Employment Network was first proposed in the Secretary-General's report entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" in which he stated:

> "Together with the heads of the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, I am convening a high-level policy network on youth employment — drawing on the most creative leaders in private industry, civil society and economic policy to explore imaginative approaches to this difficult challenge.
>
> "I will ask this policy network to propose a set of recommendations that I can convey to world leaders within a year. The possible sources of solutions will include the Internet and the informal sector, especially the contribution that small enterprises can make to employment generation."[7]

6. The 12-member High-level Panel[8] of the Youth Employment Network met for the first time in July 2001 at ILO headquarters in Geneva under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, with the Director-General of ILO and the President of the World Bank also in attendance. At that meeting, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for both immediate action and long-term commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goal on youth employment and invited the High-level Panel to continue working with him in an advisory capacity on an ongoing basis. Finally, the Secretary-General requested ILO to take the lead in organizing the future work of the Youth Employment Network and to assume the responsibility for hosting a permanent secretariat.

IV. Work and achievements to date of the Youth Employment Network

7. The recommendations of the High-level Panel[9] encouraged world leaders to take personal responsibility for translating the commitments made at the Millennium Summit into action through a specific political process. First, Heads of State and Heads of Government were invited to develop national action plans on youth employment, with targets for the creation of jobs and for the reduction of unemployment, and to present these plans to the United Nations in a year's time. These action plans should be based on a critical and self-critical review of past national policies. Furthermore, Governments were invited to volunteer to be champions of this process, to take the lead in preparing their action plans and in showing the way to others.

8. In developing their plans, Governments were encouraged to closely involve young people and to integrate their actions for youth employment into a comprehensive employment policy. Employment policy was seen not as a mere sectoral policy, but rather as the successful mobilization of all public policies.

9. The Panel's recommendations presented youth as an asset, not as a problem. In the next 10 years 1.2 billion young women and men will enter the working-age population, the best-educated and best-trained generation of young people ever, with

great potential for economic and social development. Also, the recommendations presented youth as a creative force for today — and not only for tomorrow. The recommendations avoid speaking of young people as "tomorrow's leaders", but rather as "today's partners":

> "Young people are now asking that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their roles be recognized. Rather than being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found, they want to be accepted as partners for development, helping to chart a common course and shaping the future for everyone."[10]

10. Finally, the Panel has come up with a straightforward political message, which can be summarized in four principles: employability — invest in education and vocational training for young people, and improve the impact of those investments; equal opportunities — give young women the same opportunities as young men; entrepreneurship — make it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young women and men; and employment creation — place employment creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy. These recommendations were transmitted to the President of the General Assembly, where they were discussed on 19 November 2001 in the overall framework of the follow-up to the Millennium Summit.

11. The establishment of the secretariat of the Youth Employment Network is a major milestone in the implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel and, as from September 2002, the International Labour Office in Geneva began hosting the joint United Nations/World Bank/ILO secretariat. The Government of Sweden has provided start-up financial assistance for the secretariat, effective December 2002.

12. Thus far, seven countries[11] have expressed their desire to be lead countries for the Youth Employment Network and to champion the preparation of youth employment action plans, as called for in the Panel's policy recommendations. Countries have also turned to the World Bank, ILO and the United Nations Secretariat, asking for assistance on youth employment in the framework of the Youth Employment Network. Follow-up missions have been undertaken or are planned in a number of these countries, often resulting in concrete measures both to develop projects and to include youth employment in their policy frameworks.[12] A set of guidelines (see annex II) has been developed for countries wishing to be lead countries for the Youth Employment Network.

13. Following its first meeting, in July 2001, the High-level Panel set up four Working Groups: on employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation. The results of these four Working Groups have been integrated into a consolidated document that provides further guidance on these four thematic areas of action first recommended by the Panel in its 2001 recommendations. Furthermore, that consolidated document: (a) serves to document the ongoing discussions within the High-level Panel since the issuance of its 2001 recommendations; (b) provides guidance to Member States in preparing national reviews and action plans on youth employment, and thus supplements the guidance note (annex I) that was sent to all Governments; and (c) provides guidance to Youth Employment Network partners in designing, implementing and evaluating youth employment policies and programmes.

14. The High-level Panel members have been active advocates for the Youth Employment Network through their own networks, thereby transforming the Network into a "network of networks". The United Nations Secretariat and the World Bank are active partners in this initiative, and support for Member States and for the activities of the High-level Panel is being coordinated and resources are being pooled. ILO and the United Nations have held regional meetings and an expert group meeting on youth employment, and further such meetings are planned.[13] Furthermore, the activities of the Youth Employment Network are being coordinated with the work of the United Nations Development Group and with the United Nations Millennium Development Project, as well as with the overall strategy for implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

15. The Youth Employment Network was presented to the meeting of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)[14] in March 2003. Recognizing that youth employment is both an integral part of the Millennium Declaration and a key contribution to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, including those related to poverty reduction, the Committee confirmed its strong support of the Network. The Committee furthermore noted that the Network provided the United Nations system with an opportunity to influence the international development agenda and policy debate with a positive message in support of the aspirations of the world's young people. Given the political and intersectoral dimensions of youth employment, the Committee underscored the necessity of an integrated, system-wide approach that would address a range of related issues within the purview of the system, including young people and armed conflict, HIV/AIDS, the root causes of terrorism and gender equality. The Committee called on its members to contribute actively to Governments' efforts for the elaboration of national reviews and action plans, as well as to provide inputs for the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of resolution 57/165, particularly the provisions contained in its paragraph 3.

V. Outcome of the second meeting of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network

16. The second meeting of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network was held at ILO, in Geneva, on 30 June and 1 July 2003. In addition to the members of the Panel, the meeting was attended by youth representatives, government delegations, including some with ministerial-level representation, and representatives of business, trade unions, a variety of partner organizations, the United Nations Secretariat, the World Bank and ILO.

17. The Secretary-General reminded participants that in the Millennium Declaration world leaders had committed themselves to giving young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work, and stated that the Youth Employment Network, in the process of finding solutions to the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment, would give a much-needed boost to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Secretary-General highlighted youth employment as key to achieving national and collective security and commended ILO, the World Bank and colleagues in the United Nations Secretariat for demonstrating a new way of working, both together within the United

Nations system and with partners from the business community, trade unions and non-governmental organizations, and especially with young people themselves. He also said that it was important not only to accept but also to encourage youth input into national poverty reduction strategies. The Network's challenge was now to move from the excellent policy work that had been achieved to a new phase of action at the country level.

18. The Director-General of ILO, in his opening remarks, underlined that in the uncertain and troubled times since the first meeting of the High-level Panel, in July 2001, the importance and relevance of youth employment had only grown. The Director-General also referred to areas where further progress should be expected of the Network. There was a need to drive home the importance of youth employment to the overall development agenda. He welcomed the participants' views on how to better involve young people in the Network. Echoing the Panel's recon mendations to consider youth as an asset, not as a problem, the Director-General called on participants to avoid stigmatizing the victim and stressed that unemployment was the problem, and youth were the solution. Finally, the Director-General called on the Network to embark on a new phase of implementation on the ground.

19. The Managing Director of the World Bank signalled the Bank's committed engagement on youth issues and in the work of the Network. She pledged that the World Bank would promote the youth employment agenda through its relationship with Governments and would take up this issue in its consultations with the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In the context of its relationship with ILO, the Bank would also work to integrate youth employment into its projects, including those on health and education.

20. At the meeting the High-level Panel discussed a draft action programme recommending the next five steps to be taken by the Network:

(a) First, a call for the Youth Employment Network to endorse the High-level Panel's 2003 recommendations on employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation, based on the road maps produced by the Panel's four Working Groups. Each road map outlines the obstacles faced in achieving decent and productive work for youth, and policy and operational solutions for overcoming these obstacles, and provides examples and background on cases where these policies are being put into practice;

(b) Initiatives to stimulate and encourage Governments to design and implement national action plans for youth employment, as called for in General Assembly resolution 57/165;

(c) A proposal for social dialogue on youth employment, inviting representatives of employers and workers to participate in the design and implementation of these action plans;

(d) An invitation to youth organizations all over the world to advise on the design of youth employment programmes, to contribute to the implementation of these programmes, to help Governments monitor progress towards their commitments on youth employment and to work with the High-level Panel in an ongoing advisory capacity;

(e) A call for the World Bank and ILO to jointly develop an initiative for mobilizing funding for national youth employment programmes, through close

partnerships and regional cooperation, and for the work of the Youth Employment Network secretariat.

21. Youth representatives, for their part, presented a proposal on their own involvement in the Network's broader activities and on how to organize themselves into a sustainable advisory group. Their presentation referred to the need for reliable indicators, a youth panel to work with the High-level Panel and a database of national youth organizations working on national action plans. They also highlighted the need for a coordinating mechanism between the Youth Employment Network and its youth constituents, possibly supported by the appointment of a youth coordinator for the Network.

22. Following the meeting of the High-level Panel, the Youth Employment Network secretariat has undertaken joint consultations on strengthening the coherence of its activities on youth employment to anchor the work of the Network. This involves action in three areas:

(a) A political process: linking policy to action:

(i) Develop a strategic plan for follow-up to General Assembly resolution 57/165;

(ii) Initiate assistance to lead countries in the elaboration of national action plans on youth employment and share experiences and modalities with a broader group of countries;

(iii) Mainstream youth employment policies in the ILO Global Employment Agenda and in national poverty reduction strategies, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;

(iv) Ensure strong participation of young people in the elaboration and implementation of national action plans and strengthen the role of youth as a sounding board for the High-level Panel;

(b) Mapping the challenge of youth employment:

(i) Develop new statistical tools to monitor the situation and experiences of youth in the labour market, as well as policy-oriented indicators on youth employment, addressing training needs, underemployment, gender constraints for youth, the working poor and those working in the informal economy. These indicators will also contribute to the monitoring of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals;

(ii) Take stock of lessons learned from the past work of the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO on youth employment;

(iii) Undertake joint United Nations/World Bank/ILO evaluations of youth employment programmes and policies at the country level;

(iv) Develop a joint research agenda on, for example: indicators of youth employment, unemployment and underemployment; the link between policies and programmes to eliminate child labour and those promoting youth employment; youth employment and conflict; and the contribution of youth employment to poverty reduction strategies;

(c) Promoting initiatives and programmes with proven impact on youth employment through network development:

(i) Improve advocacy and share good practices through an interactive Youth Employment Network web site and communications strategy;

(ii) Support exchanges of youth employment initiatives, including grass-roots experiences, and feed these experiences into Government policy.

VI. Implications of General Assembly resolution 57/165 for the Youth Employment Network

23. The strategic implications of resolution 57/165 for the work of the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO can be seen in the medium term, running through 2005. The General Assembly resolution on promoting youth employment was discussed by the Governing Body of ILO in March 2003, when its Committee on Employment and Social Policy recommended a favourable response to the General Assembly's invitation for ILO to play a major substantive role in the implementation of the resolution.[15] Therefore from the present until early 2004, the Youth Employment Network and its core partner institutions — ILO, the World Bank and the United Nations Secretariat — are called upon to support Member States in carrying out national reviews and action plans on youth employment. A guidance note for the preparation of the national reviews and action plans (annex I) was sent to all Member States in March 2003, and the deadline for submission of those reviews and plans to the United Nations Secretariat is March 2004.

24. During the second year, from 2004 to early 2005, the Youth Employment Network, under the leadership of ILO, is called upon to carry out, in cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat, the World Bank and other relevant agencies, a global analysis and evaluation of these national reviews and action plans and of progress made in the work of the Youth Employment Network. ILO has announced its intention to prepare that global analysis and evaluation in the framework of its *World Employment Report 2005*. Since youth employment is an integral part of the international community's strategy for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, that major analysis of youth employment will contribute to the five-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in 2005.[16]

VII. Conclusions

25. **Since the launching of the Youth Employment Network following the Millennium Summit, the urgency of providing young people with access to decent and productive work has grown. The Network has succeeded in demonstrating how diverse partners in the international community can work together to address the various dimensions of this challenge. The General Assembly, through its resolution on promoting youth employment, not only strengthened the mandate of the Network, but also provided guidance for the Network's activities over the next two years, leading up to the five-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the Millennium Declaration.**

26. **The focus in the next phase of the Network's activities is clearly on action at the country level. To prepare for such action, it is urgent that Member States**

submit their national reviews and action plans on youth employment by the March 2004 deadline, and that necessary steps be taken to mobilize, both nationally and internationally, the resources necessary for the implementation of these action plans.

Notes

[1] The present report was prepared in collaboration with the secretariat of the Youth Employment Network.

[2] *Global Employment Trends*, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2003, p. 1, and "World and regional estimates for selected key indicators of the labour market", Wesley Schaible and Ramya Mahadevan-Vijaya, Employment Paper 2002/36, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2002, p. 20.

[3] *A Future without Child Labour: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2002, figure 3.

[4] *Youth and Work: Global Trends*, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2001, p. 4.

[5] Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, China, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Germany, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine.

[6] Resolution 55/2, United Nations Millennium Declaration, para. 20.

[7] A/54/2000, paras. 110-111.

[8] Saifuddin Abdullah, César Alierta, Ruth C. L. Cardoso, Hernando de Soto, Geeta Rao Gupta, Bill Jordan, Allan Larsson, Rick Little, Maria Livanos Cattaui, Magatte Wade, Ralph Willis and Rosanna Wong.

[9] See A/56/422.

[10] A/56/422, para. 8.

[11] Azerbaijan, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Namibia, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

[12] Countries where action is under way or planned in the immediate future include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Ghana, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nigeria, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Viet Nam.

[13] For example: the ILO/Japan Tripartite Regional Meeting on Youth Employment, Bangkok, 27 February-1 March 2002; the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Integration of Youth Employment into public investment policies and the framework of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Ouagadougou, 3-5 December 2002; and the joint United Nations/ILO Expert Group Meeting on Jobs for Youth: National Strategies for Employment Promotion, Geneva, 15-16 January 2003.

[14] Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network, issues note, CEB/2003/HLCP/CRP.3, presented at the fifth session of the CEB High-level Committee on Programmes, Rome, 26-27 March 2003.

[15] See document GB.286/15, para. 140, where the Committee recommended that the Governing Body take note of the General Assembly resolution on promoting youth employment; requested the International Labour Office to assist and support, upon request, the efforts of Governments in the elaboration of national reviews and action plans on youth employment, and to undertake, by May 2005, a global analysis and evaluation of progress made in this regard; and requested the Office to report to it periodically on progress made by the Youth Employment Network in the implementation of the General Assembly resolution.

[16] See A/56/326, para. 306.

Annex I

Guidance note for the preparation of national reviews and action plans on youth employment in response to General Assembly resolution 57/165*

I. Context

1. The commitment to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work emanates from the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

2. Governments may wish to refer to General Assembly document A/56/422 for overall guidance in the preparation of national reviews and action plans on youth employment. That document specifies, in paragraph 14, that "strategies can be shaped on a global level, but policies and action plans have to be developed at the national level. Here, government leadership is fundamental".

3. The need to first carry out a critical and self-critical review of past national policies is emphasized as essential in the preparation of national action plans. In developing their action plans, Governments and other participants may wish to base these plans not only on the needs of young people but also on the strengths that they bring to businesses, communities and societies. Furthermore, Governments may wish to consider an integrated concept for employment policy, seeing employment policy not as a mere sectoral policy, but rather as the successful mobilization of all public policies with the aim of getting young people into full and productive employment.

II. Consultative process

4. Resolution 57/165 specifies, in paragraph 2, that the preparation of national reviews and action plans should "involve youth organizations and young people ..., taking into account, inter alia, the commitments made by Member States in this regard, in particular those included in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond".[a] Governments may therefore wish to put in place a national consultative mechanism involving youth organizations and young people, as well as representatives of employers', workers', private sector and civil society organizations.

5. In this regard, document A/56/422 states, in paragraph 15,

> "While government leadership is critical, Governments cannot do it alone. Business also has a substantial interest in making the most of youth potential, and in avoiding the negative consequences of widespread youth unemployment. Employers recognize that employing young people is good for business, as they bring to the workplace enthusiasm, energy, commitment, new ideas and the willingness to embrace change. There is also a role for networks and partnerships among Governments, at the national and local levels, employers' organizations, trade unions, youth organizations and other civil society groups: they can learn from each other and pool efforts and resources."

---

* The present guidance note was sent to Member States with the note verbale of 25 March 2003 from the Secretary-General.

6. In this context, the High-level Panel of the Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network recommends that civil society, the business community, employers, trade unions and youth organizations should also be invited to contribute to policy-making and implementation at both the global and the national level.

7. Government ministries and departments responsible for employment, labour, youth and finance could be involved in the preparation of national action plans.

III. Issues to be considered

8. In order to facilitate the preparation of the "global analysis and evaluation of progress made" (resolution 57/165, para. 3), Governments may wish to structure their action plans in the framework of the four global priorities for a decent work strategy for young people, proposed by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel: entrepreneurship, employability, equal opportunities and employment creation.[b]

Employability: invest in education and vocational training for young people, and improve the impact of those investments;

Equal opportunities: give young women the same opportunities as young men;

Entrepreneurship: make it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young women and men;

Employment creation: place employment creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy.

9. Governments may also wish to address additional issues, including but not limited to: (a) action in favour of youth in positions of vulnerability due to conflict or poverty, and (b) an intergenerational or life-cycle approach to youth employment.

10. Governments may furthermore wish to consider the importance of information and communication technologies, which offer

> "significant potential for welfare enhancement and employment generation among young people, and their impact on each of the priority elements should be fully considered in every action plan. Here, emphasis must be placed on closing the digital divide within and between countries."[c]

11. In developing their action plans, Governments may wish to review the quality and range of available statistics regarding employment, unemployment and underemployment of young people. Specifically, Governments are invited to provide the following statistics based on International Labour Organization (ILO) definitions of employment and unemployment and on the United Nations definition of young people, those between 15 and 24 years of age:

- youth unemployment rate
- ratio of youth unemployment rate to total unemployment rate
- share of youth unemployment in total unemployment
- share of youth unemployment in total youth population
- proportion of young people who are either employed or in education or training.

12. The action plan may provide information on actual practice and plans for collecting statistics on the evolution of youth employment in the country. All available or potential sources of information on youth employment and unemployment (and related variables such as underemployment, child labour, self-employment, employment by occupation and employment in the informal economy) should be specified. If a regular labour force survey is not currently being carried out, Governments may wish to specify any plan they have to launch such a survey programme. Other available data sources, such as household surveys, are also relevant.

IV. Information relevant to the preparation of national reviews and action plans

13. Governments may wish, in preparing their national reviews and action plans, to refer to the following sources where they exist: (a) national youth policies and programmes, including national follow-up action to resolutions 54/120 and 56/117, and (b) national employment programmes, strategies and/or action plans, where these have been prepared.

14. Also, Governments that are members of ILO may wish to refer to the reports they were requested to submit by April 2003 on the subject of the Convention concerning Employment Policy 1964 (Convention No. 122) and the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation 1984 (Recommendation No. 169), as well as aspects of the following as they relate to the promotion of full, productive and freely chosen employment: Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (Convention No. 142) and the Job Creation in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Recommendation 1998 (Recommendation No. 189). Those documents may provide valuable elements for national youth employment action plans.

15. Governments may also wish to refer to their submissions with respect to the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Comprehensive report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" (A/AC.253/13-E/CN.5/2000/2).

16. Governments are invited to seek additional guidance and assistance in the preparation of their action plans from one or more of the following: ILO field offices, World Bank field offices, the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations regional commissions and other relevant bodies within the United Nations system.

17. In order to facilitate the global analysis and evaluation of progress made, as requested in resolution 57/165, Governments are invited to submit copies of their national reviews and action plans on youth employment to the United Nations Secretariat no later than March 2004. These documents may be sent directly to Donald Lee, Focal Point, Youth Employment Network, Division for Social Policy and Development, Two United Nations Plaza, DC2-1358, New York, New York 10017 (Telephone: 212-963-8762; Fax: 212-963-3062).

Notes

[a] Resolution 50/81, annex.

[b] See A/56/422, paras. 18-26.

[c] A/56/422, para. 19.

Annex II

Guidelines for lead countries of the Youth Employment Network*

1. The following areas of action are proposed for countries volunteering to be lead or champion countries for the Youth Employment Network:

Confirm your Government's commitment at the highest political level to decent and productive work for young people

2. The United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted at the Millennium Summit, the largest gathering ever of heads of State and Heads of Government. While a number of governmental ministries or departments will no doubt be involved in preparing the action plan, it is understood that the political impetus for this initiative comes from the highest political level.

Prepare a national review and action plan on youth employment

3. While there is no particular model to be followed in preparing these reviews and action plans, your Government may wish to refer to the panel's policy recommendations for overall guidance as to the content and the process to be followed. The action plan may translate the four global priorities highlighted in the Panel's recommendations — employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and the relationship of youth employment to broader employment and macroeconomic policies — into strategies for national action. The Government may furthermore wish to invite civil society, the business community, employers, trade unions and youth organizations to contribute to this process.

Contribute to sharing national experience with other countries and with the international community

4. Lead countries will be expected not only to develop national reviews and action plans on youth employment, but also to share their plans and experiences with others. While no fixed modalities for sharing such experiences have been established, lead countries may wish to organize regional or international meetings or exchanges in order to build momentum for broader action at the regional and global levels in favour of youth employment. It is expected that bilateral and multilateral technical cooperation activities will be initiated to support such action, whereby countries at different levels of development can share the results of youth employment projects, programmes and policies. The youth employment initiative is expected to be representative of major regions and of countries at different levels of development. Industrialized countries can be expected to contribute financially to the youth employment activities in developing and least developed countries, whereas all countries can be expected to have knowledge and expertise to share and to receive.

* The present guidelines were prepared by the Youth Employment Network secretariat in response to the call by the High-level Panel to invite Governments to volunteer to take the lead in preparing their action plans (see A/56/422, para. 28).

Contribute to a broader political process within the General Assembly in the overall framework of the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and within the International Labour Organization (ILO) for a coherent and integrated international strategy on employment

5. Lead countries may wish to support the Millennium Declaration's commitment on youth employment not simply as an objective in its own right, but furthermore as a means to support the overall road map for the implementation of all the Millennium Development Goals. Specifically, lead countries may wish to support a resolution in the General Assembly calling for the development of national action plans on youth employment and calling on ILO to undertake a global review and analysis of these plans as part of a longer-term political process. Also, action on youth employment can be expected to contribute to broader employment policy with both national and international dimensions.